



**Kay Ivey  
Governor**



**Graham L. Sisson, Jr.  
Executive Director**

# **State of Alabama Governor's Office on Disability FY 2022 Annual Report**



**It's all GOOD**



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Dr. Graham L. Sisson, Jr.  
Executive Director



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## The Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD)

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# **The Honorable Kay Ivey Governor State of Alabama**



KAY IVEY, GOVERNOR  
STATE OF ALABAMA

The work contained in this annual report shows how the Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD) is successfully helping the more than 805,849 people in Alabama living with a disability (Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2023). I rely on GOOD to provide reliable and helpful information on disability resources and the unmet needs of affected Alabamians. My administration is committed to increasing opportunities for people with disabilities in Alabama as well as increasing employment opportunities through the Governor's Job Fair for People with Disabilities. GOOD is an excellent resource. If you need assistance with disability-related issues, please do not hesitate to contact the Governor's Office on Disability.

*Kay Ivey*



Dr. Graham L. Sisson, Jr. and Governor Kay Ivey

## **Dr. Graham L. Sisson, Jr., Executive Director**

Graham was appointed as Executive Director of the Governor's Office on Disability in October 2007 and was reappointed in January 2011. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of North Alabama in Accounting in 1987. Graham also attended Vanderbilt University and was awarded his Juris Doctorate in 1990. He was admitted to the Alabama State Bar in 1990. He received a certificate in Rehabilitation Leadership and Management from Auburn University in May, 2009. Graham served as an adjunct law professor teaching a disability law course at the Birmingham School of Law and taught a doctoral course in disability law and history at Auburn University. Graham is a 2016 graduate of Auburn University with a PhD in Rehabilitation, Counseling, and Leadership. He has lived with a disability since 1982.

### **Letter from Dr. Sisson**

I would like to thank the Governor and the Alabama Legislature for their continuing support of GOOD.

Fiscal Year 2022 has been another year of positive growth and change for the office. GOOD continues to maintain nine local advisory committees around the state which provide grassroots input about unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities and increases the visibility of the office. GOOD partners with these local advisory groups to facilitate the GOOD mission statement and strategic plan and obtain information at the grassroots level. GOOD will continue to monitor the unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities.

The GOOD website has been revised further to be even more user-friendly and includes additional resources.

GOOD is still available to do training, accessibility surveying, and speaking at meetings or seminars at no cost. To schedule training, speaking engagements, or surveying, call GOOD's Toll Free Number at **888-879-3582**. Meetings continue to be held with other state agencies to foster collaboration and maximize state resources for people with disabilities. A special thanks is again given to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services for its close partnership with GOOD.

Information about disability issues and training continues to be disseminated throughout the state. Awareness is a powerful tool which leads to greater access for individuals with disabilities. GOOD continues its role of dispensing accurate information. Join the GOOD list by accessing the appropriate icon on GOOD's website at [www.good.alabama.gov](http://www.good.alabama.gov). **GOOD's Toll-Free Number is 888-879-3582** for consumers or anyone interested in information, referrals, and resources for people with disabilities in Alabama.

We look forward to positively impacting the lives of Alabamians with disabilities.

## GOOD Overview

The Governor's Office on Disability was created by Executive Order Number 43 in 1999. It was formed to serve as a statewide clearing house for information on disability and resources in Alabama. Its other major function is to act as a liaison to the Governor's Office on disability issues.

The Governor's Office on Disability's mission statement was revised in 2008 as follows:

**"Facilitate the inclusion of Alabamians with disabilities in education, employment, housing, transportation, healthcare, and leisure."**

Executive Order 15 in 2011 re-established the Governor's Office on Disability under the new administration. Because resources are scarce in Alabama, the Governor's Office on Disability seeks to maximize disability resources by identifying existing ones and fostering collaboration among public and private entities that serve people with disabilities.

The Governor's Office on Disability actively seeks to engage communication between individuals with disabilities and their families and entities that provide services to them. GOOD's website, [www.good.alabama.gov](http://www.good.alabama.gov), is one tool that is being expanded to facilitate open dialogue and access on disability resources and issues. To foster communication even more, GOOD developed a list serve. Anyone interested in issues affecting people with disabilities can join the GOOD list by accessing the website at [www.good.alabama.gov](http://www.good.alabama.gov), clicking the "Join the GOOD List" icon and entering in personal contact and email information. Periodically, cutting edge information on disability will be shared with list members.

### Strategic Plan

#### (1) Legislation Initiative

Monitor Alabama's disability related legislation and policies and provide policy analysis to the Governor.

**Objective 1:** Monitor constituent issues with regard to policy formulation and recommendations for legislation.

**Objective 2:** Serve as a liaison to the Governor on all necessary matters of interest related to the GOOD mission.

#### (2) Collaboration Initiative

Establish a united voice to determine and meet the needs of the GOOD mission.

**Objective 1:** Utilize local advisory committees to determine the unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities.

**Objective 2:** Partner with public and private entities, inclusive of state agencies, that advance the achievement of the GOOD mission.

**Objective 3:** To accept and resolve referrals regarding disability issues from the Governor's Constituent Affairs Office and other referral resources.

#### (3) Consultation Initiative

Serve as advisor on public disability-related issues in Alabama.

**Objective 1:** Provide informal legal opinions on disability issues to the Governor's Legal Office.

**Objective 2:** Provide analytical information to the Governor's Legal Office relative to the GOOD mission.

**Objective 3:** Act as an expert resource regarding the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and related laws.

#### (4) Dissemination Initiative

Promote public awareness of actions and activities in fulfilling GOOD's mission.

**Objective 1:** Increase effective utilization of available resources for Alabamians with disabilities.

**Objective 2:** Establish a website as the primary dissemination method of GOOD actions, activities and publications.

**Objective 3:** Promote local and/or statewide media coverage of GOOD's actions and activities when possible.

# Governor's Office on Disability

## Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2022

### I. Convening Disability Consumer Advisory Councils

- 9 Regional Council Meetings held by Zoom twice during this fiscal year
- Presentations and Guest Speakers
  - COVID 19 Update - Bill Kennedy, State Social Work Director with ADPH
  - Alabama's ABLE Savings Plan - Anita Kelley, Director of Savings Division, Alabama State Treasurer
  - Lakeshore Foundation – John Kemp, President & CEO of Lakeshore Foundation
  - Community Waiver Program —Shandra Monterastelli, Senior Staff Attorney, ADAP

### II. Trainings/Disability Awareness

#### ADA

- In collaboration with the Alabama's ADA toll free information services conducted in FY 2022:
  - **24** ADA Trainings — **13** Accessibility Reviews/Consultations

### III. Information and Referral

- Number of inquiries on disability issues FY 2022 — Goal **800** — **1085** actual inquiries

### IV. Website

- Continuously updating website, resources, and corresponding with members on the GOOD list.

### VI. Legislation Initiative

- GOOD continued to work on legislation to address unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities. GOOD tracked:
  - Act 2022-202, Summary: Mental illness, individuals in need of care for mental illness, establishes consistency in process of commitment of individuals with mental illnesses, Sec. 22-52-10.11 added; Sec. 22-52-1.1, 22-52-10.2, 22-52-91 am'd.
  - Act 2022-129, Summary: To amend section relating to State Board of Prosthetists & Orthotists.
  - HB522 by Representative Gil Isbell, Summary: Guardianships and conservatorships, Colby Act, decision-making agreements as an alternative to guardianships provided for. Read for the first time and referred to the House of Representatives committee on Judiciary.
  - HB263 by Representative Debbie Wood, Introduced Regular Session 2021, Summary: Exton's Law, Organ transplant recipients, discrimination against persons with disabilities prohibited. Read for the first time and referred to the Senate committee on Healthcare.

### VI. FAND—Functional and Access Needs in Disasters Task Force

- GOOD took a leadership role in this statewide taskforce in 2013 and continued through 2022. Originally named the Special Populations Taskforce, it was renamed Functional and Access Needs in Disaster to accurately reflect its purpose of ensuring Alabamians with functional and accessible needs are not only considered, but included in all phases of emergency management. Dr. Sisson chairs this group and continues to serve as liaison between FAND and the Governor's Mass Care and Sheltering Taskforce. Those interested in joining this effort should contact Dr. Sisson at 800-441-7607 extension 7189.

### FY 2022 Budget

Personnel Costs .....	\$56,679
Employee Benefits .....	\$23,565
Travel-in-State.....	\$135
Travel Out-of-State.....	0
Repairs & Maintenance .....	\$1,100
Rentals & Leases .....	0
Utilities & Communications .....	\$122
Professional Services .....	\$1,864
Supplies, Materials & Operating Expenses.....	\$3,824
Grants & Benefits .....	\$22,595
Other Equipment Purchase .....	0
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>\$109,884</b>

### FY 2022 Smart Budget

**Number of Inquiries** — Projected **800**, Actual **1,085**

**Number responded to within 72 hours** — Projected **100%**, Actual **100%**

## **Governor's Office on Disability Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2022**

- **Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities (ACDD) Partners in Policy Making Conference — Dr. Graham Sisson Presents on Employment, November 5, 2021**



Left to right, Representative Gil F. Isbel, Dr. Colleen Wieck, (Executive Director of the Minnesota Council on Developmental Disabilities), Nancy Anderson (Associate Director - Alabama Disability Advocacy Program), Terry Pezent (Associate Commissioner - Division of Developmental Disabilities, Alabama Department of Mental Health), Kimberly Boswell (Commissioner – Alabama Department of Mental Health), Dr. Graham Sisson (Executive Director – Governor's Office on Disability), Darryle Powell (Executive Director, Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities) Young Boozer (State Treasurer, Alabama State Treasury), Linda Russo (Inclusion and Advocacy Coordinator – UAB Civitan-Sparks Clinic)

- **Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month — Governor Kay Ivey Signs Proclamation, April, 7, 2022**



Left to right, TBI survivor and Veteran Brandon Peters and Aspen the Service Dog, Veterans Recovery Resources, Mobile County; Dr. Graham Sisson, Governor's Office on Disability; Elmore County student and TBI survivor Eleora Littlejohn; State Head Injury Coordinator April B. Turner, ADRS; Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund- Chair Dr. Despina Stavrinos, UAB; Joshua Harmon, Coosa County TBI survivor; Brinda Dungan - TBI Navigator, ADRS, AHITF- Advisory Council, Jefferson County, TBI survivor; Ian Phillips, Alabama Head Injury Task Force Advisory Council, Autauga County, TBI survivor; Matt Beth, Auburn University Doctoral Student, AHITF Advisory Council, Lee County, TBI survivor. Seated, the Honorable Governor Kay Ivey.

## Governor's Office on Disability Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2022

- **Down Syndrome Alabama — Jake Pratt Scholarship Sponsored by UPS Award Ceremony, Hoover, May 5, 2022**

Down Syndrome Alabama (DSA) awarded scholarships to five young adults with Down syndrome to go towards their post-secondary education. Two of the five recipients are enrolled in the EAGLES Program at Auburn University, two are enrolled in CrossingPoints at the University of Alabama, and one is enrolled in Mississippi State's ACCESS Program.

The UPS Foundation granted Down Syndrome Alabama \$25,000 in honor of one of their employees in the Birmingham area, Jake Pratt, who recently celebrated his one-year UPS work anniversary. Jake has Down syndrome and completed the post-secondary education program at ClemsonLIFE.

Attendees met the first Jake Pratt Scholarship recipients and experienced Jake's role in bringing awareness, acceptance, and advocacy for individuals with Down syndrome.



Listed left to right, Kelly Peoples, Executive Director, Down Syndrome Alabama, Dr. Graham Sisson, Executive Director, Governor's Office on Disability, Jake Pratt, UPS, first scholarship recipient.



Dr. Graham Sisson, Executive Director of the Governor's Office on Disability addresses the attendees at the event.

- **Partners In PolicyMaking Alabama, GOOD Agency of Distinction Award, May 13, 2022**



## Governor's Office on Disability Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2022

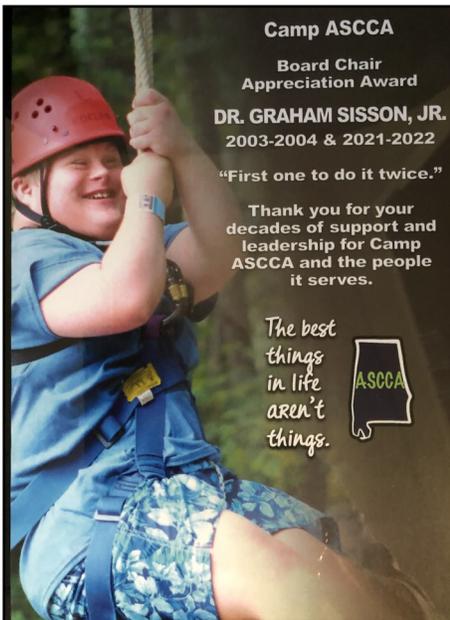
- **Forestry Commission's Reopening of Flagg Mountain Fire Tower in Weogufka, June 15, 2022**



**Governor Kay Ivey** was the key note speaker at the event.

**Dr. Graham Sisson** spoke at the event and discussed his role as Executive Director of GOOD and Chair of the Alabama Trails Commission. He recognized the Alabama Trails Foundation for the accessibility of the approach trail for the Tower and emphasized the need for universal access for Alabama's outdoor recreational facilities and trails. Universal access is a goal in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

- **Camp ASCCA Annual Board Meeting, Dr. Graham Sisson Recognized as Outgoing Chair, July 23, 2022**



Dr. Graham Sisson as the out going Camp ASCCA Chair receives a plaque and is recognized as the only member to hold two terms. During one of his terms, the current Camp ASCCA Director, John Stephenson was hired.

- **Preparedness for Alabama Resilience Summit, Huntsville, August, 23, 2022**



Left to right, Dr. Graham Sisson and Davina Patterson, Executive Director, Disability Resource Network, Huntsville

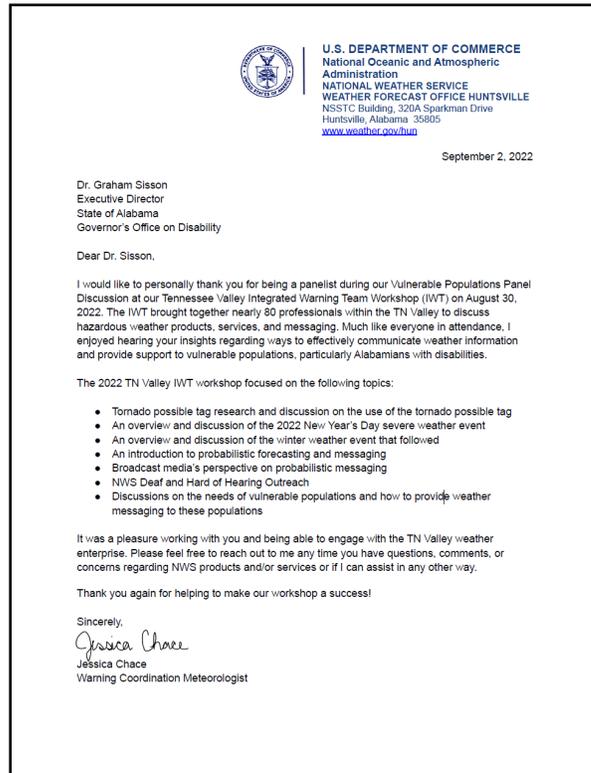
Dr. Graham Sisson, Executive Director of the Governor's Office on Disability and Chair of the Functional and Access Needs in Disaster (FAND) taskforce along with state and local leaders attended the Preparedness for Alabama Resilience Summit held by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA).

The purpose of the summit was to enhance disaster preparedness in Alabama through resiliency, planning, partnership development and improved communications.

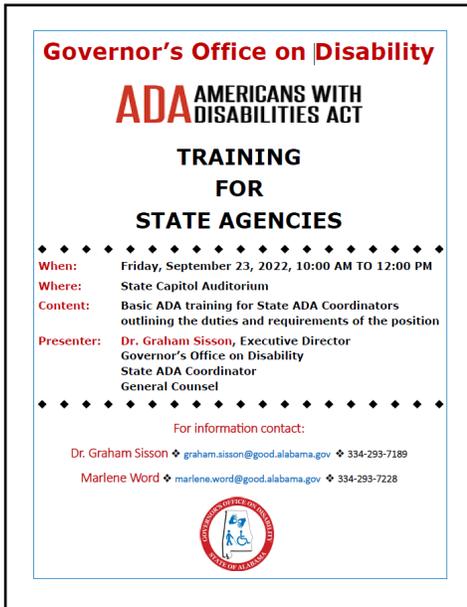
During the Summit, leaders explored how building good relationships can improve communications while responding to disasters.

## Governor's Office on Disability Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2022

- **Vulnerable Populations Panel Discussion—Tennessee Valley Integrated Warning Team Workshop, Dr. Graham Sisson serves on Panel, Huntsville, August 30, 2022**



- **GOOD Provides ADA Training for State Agencies, Montgomery, September 23, 2022**



Dr. Graham Sisson, Executive Director of GOOD and State ADA Coordinator presented the first in a series of trainings on the Americans with Disabilities Act to the State Agency ADA Coordinators. Attendees were provided the following information electronically and in a printed manual:

- ADA Coordinator Job Description Examples
- Text of ADA
- Title II Regulations
- Title II Regulations Updated Public Comments Included
- Title II Technical Assistance Manual
- Self Evaluation Plan Requirements Technical Assistance Manual Excerpts
- Self Evaluation Plan Slide Presentation
- Service Animal Guidance
- Emotional Support Animal Guidance
- Testing Accommodations Guidance

### One or more representatives from the following agencies attended:

- Alabama ABC Board
- Alabama Community College
- Alabama Dept. of Corrections
- Alabama Dept. of Early Childhood Education
- Alabama Dept. of Economic & Community Affairs
- Alabama Dept. Environmental Management
- Alabama Dept. of Finance
- Alabama Dept. of Human Resources
- Alabama Dept. of Insurance
- Alabama Dept. of Mental Health
- Alabama Dept. of Public Health
- Alabama Dept. of Revenue
- Alabama Dept. of Transportation
- Alabama Dept. of Youth Services
- Alabama Emergency Management Agency
- Alabama Forestry Commission
- Alabama Law Enforcement Agency
- Alabama State Banking Department
- Legislative Services Agency

## **Governor's Office on Disability Partnerships**

### **VIII. Partnerships**

Amarex Corporation  
Alabama Association of Regional Councils Conference  
Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities  
Alabama Community College Association  
Alabama Counseling Association  
Alabama Department of Corrections  
Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources  
Alabama Department of Public Health  
Alabama Department of Human Resources  
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services  
Alabama Disability Advocacy Program  
Alabama Easter Seals  
Alabama Emergency Management Agency  
Alabama Fire College Medical Needs Shelter  
Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund  
Alabama Governor's Office  
Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum  
Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council  
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind  
Alabama Legislature  
Alabama Lifespan Respite Coalition  
Alabama Multiagency Feeding Plan  
Alabama Statewide Assistive Technology Advisory Council  
Alabama State Interagency Transition Team  
Alabama State University  
Alabama Tax Tribunal  
Alabama Transit Coalition  
Alabaster Career Centers  
Anniston Career Center  
Auburn University  
Birmingham Career Center  
Birmingham Committee on ADA  
Blind Advisory Committee  
Brewton Career Center  
Calhoun Community College  
Camp ASCCA  
Camp McDowell, Jasper  
Central Alabama Community College  
Cheaha State Park  
Child Care Resources, Inc.  
City of Auburn  
City of Gulf Shores  
City of Hamilton  
City of Huntsville  
Cullman Career Center  
Dallas County EMA  
Deaf/Blind Coalition  
Demopolis Career Center  
Dothan Career Center  
Disabilities Rights & Resources of Birmingham  
Disability Resource Network of Huntsville  
Family Voices of Alabama  
Flagg Mountain Trail and Tower  
Foley Career Center  
Guntersville State Park  
Gulf State Park  
Home Medical Equipment Licensure Board  
Huntsville Career Center  
Independent Living Center of Mobile  
Independent Rights & Resources of Montgomery  
Is Able Center  
Jacksonville State University  
Jasper Career Center  
Jefferson County Personnel Board  
Jefferson County Workforce Development  
Joe Wheeler State Park  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Lee County Board of Education  
Limestone County DHR  
Mass Care and Sheltering Taskforce  
Maxwell Air Force Base  
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant  
Montevallo University  
Montgomery Career Center  
Montgomery Library for the Blind Advisory Committee  
National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils  
North Alabama Fair Housing Center  
Northeast Alabama Community College  
OASIS Advisory Council  
Oneonta Career Center  
People First  
Pell City Career Center  
Phenix City Career Center  
Roanoke Career Center  
Sheffield Towne Plaza  
Shelton State Community College  
Southeast ADA Network Training Team  
Sparks Clinic  
Special Education Advisory Panel  
State of Alabama Independent Living Council  
State Rehabilitation Council  
Trenholm State  
Troy University, Montgomery and Troy Campuses  
Tuskegee Blind Veterans Group  
Tuscaloosa Career Center  
UAB Birmingham  
Wallace State Community College



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